

The Secret Place

by David Gibbs

David Gibbs emphasizes the importance of dwelling in the 'secret place' of God for divine protection and guidance through faith and trust.

Duration: 1:08:16

Scripture: Mark 7:37

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Praise And Worship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, highlighting the need to believe that God does all things well, acknowledge His control over all situations, and have a passionate heart of praise regardless of circumstances. The stories shared illustrate the transformative power of faith, trust, and praise in the face of adversity and challenges.

Transcript

What a song and what a story. I have had the privilege in my life to meet Elizabeth Elliott many times. Her husband, Jim Elliott, was one of the men that lost their lives that day trying to give the gospel.

And indeed, they understood the danger, but they believed that God loved those Indians. I think sometimes we forget God loves other people every bit as much as He loves you and me. And we have a duty, boy, to take the love of God to them.

The music has just been outstanding. I love to hear men sing like you're singing here. It's such a great blessing.

I love it when you sing it as well. Well, that was written by a lawyer. Yeah.

Horatio Spafford, a Chicago attorney, wrote that song. And boy, the words, he had just received news, his wife and family, most of them had perished at sea. And he sat down and he wrote the song, It Is Well.

A member of his law firm said, what are you going to do now, Mr. Christian? And he went into his office and he wrote It Is Well with my soul. All the music has just been a blessing. I want us to thank these singers and musicians all together.

Would you do that? If you have your Bible, please turn to the book of Psalms, chapter 91, Psalms 91. I want to thank Brother Vaughn for the great honor and privilege of allowing Steve Kluth and I to come. The

touch of God is on us.

And I hope you understand, if you've never been involved in putting on a meeting, you cannot imagine the enormity of work by people who you don't see, in order to have everything ready to happen and ready to go. And make sure that you get all of these young people and these cooks and all these servants and thank them royally for their great service. They have just come to serve us and have done a magnificent job, just magnificent.

How many of you think the grub has been great, right? Yeah. Let's thank Brother Vaughn and all of them for that. Thank you, Brother Vaughn.

I don't know who they've got doing the cooking, but we need to put in for them to take part in the marriage supper of the lamb, I'll tell you that. They're doing a great job, just a great job. And Psalm 91 is a litany of amazing protective promises.

And many preachers that are renowned around the world for their great preaching have said Psalm 91 has probably got, for the child of God, the most protective, broad-scope promises found anywhere in Scripture. Psalm 91, in summary, says, if you and I will take some care as to where we place ourselves, God will unleash 18 divine protections. No one would want to live without these protections.

No one would want their family to be without these protections. I can't imagine anybody would want their ministry to be without the protections. But as we read this, remember, it's all conditional on verse 1. The protections all flow from a decision of placement that you and I make in our lives.

Get ready as we read this Psalm, Psalm 91. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High. Now there's the place.

Tonight, as we start, I ask you this searching question, where have you been living? Everybody here is 100% in control of where you have placed you. And God says, he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress.

My God in him will I trust. Surely, he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler. Now, if the Psalm ended right there, this would be an amazing Psalm.

Do you know what the snare of the fowler is? The fowler is the person who's trying to trap you to your harm. It was the person who set out a trap in order to catch something. I promise you, at some point in your life, you're going to have somebody trying to trap you.

Trying to trap you in your words, trap you in your emotions, trap you in your doings. You know what God says? If you will put yourself in the secret place of the Most High, God will take care of that. Surely, he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

That meant things that were dangerously stirred up. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night. Have you ever sat and said, I wonder what they're doing right now? I wonder what's happening. I wonder if I'll have my job in the morning.

I wonder if the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flyeth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. If it was a mere man making this promise, that would be meaningless, but it's God who says this.

Only with thine eyes thou shalt behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation. You want to draw an arrow from verse 9 back up to verse 1. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, for he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.

God says if you'll put yourself in the secret place, God promises divine angelic assistance. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore I will deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. Underline the first part of verse 15, for it's what this prayer advance is all about.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. Please note God doesn't say that there won't be any trouble.

All those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him.

With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. He that dwelleth in the secret place, are you living there? Now when the Bible says there's a secret place, take care here, because the word secret there is not the word we commonly use in language today. That verse is not saying that God's not this place, and he don't want you to know about it.

He's trying to keep a secret from you. You know, there's all kinds of people in the world that think God is just holding everything good back. That's bizarrely incorrect.

His blessings are new every day. But God says there is a secret place. The word secret there means a place not commonly found.

Oh, it can be found. But it's not commonly found. I remember the first time we came to this campground.

Man, we had some directions, and they were horrible. They took you everywhere. Whoever wrote those had a horrible sense of humor.

Man, we met someone. You know what they said? No, no, no, no, no. Wait, there's a secret way to go here.

And they used that word. It doesn't mean it isn't known. It means it's not commonly known.

And God says, he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High gets these protections. I can't imagine anyone in their right mind not wanting these. Surely every child of God would want them.

But it's all hinged on one decision. Where do you dwell? Where do I dwell? When we leave this magnificent facility and this phenomenal meeting, where are you going to live? Well, I don't mean where's your residence. I mean where are you going to live? And is it going to be in the secret place of the Most

High? I believe the Bible teaches clearly that there are three keys authored of God to be in the secret place.

And tonight I would ask you to write these down, and I dare say there won't be a man here that won't know them already. But I've discovered in my life, most of my growth is in doing what I already know. But I just hadn't been doing it.

How many of you all understand that one? Wow. Everybody wants to go to a Bible conference, Dr. Goetsch, to learn a new truth. Man, I just need to live the truths I've already got.

Three simple truths. You want to live in the secret place of the Most High, here's where it starts. You've got to believe with a passion that God does all things well.

Now the Scripture says that over and over again. The Bible says His way is perfect. Mark 7, verse 37.

He doeth all things well. Are you convinced no matter what you face, no matter what you see, no matter what you encounter, your God does all things well. Yeah, but Brother Gibbs, you don't understand what I'm facing right now.

I'd love to be able to say that the minute you don't believe that, you have walked out of the secret place. Because indeed, by authority of Scripture, our God does all things well. When life puts a squeeze on you, when what you never dreamed would ever come your way happens, do you say, blessed be the name of the Lord, He does all things well.

Or do you say, what are you doing? The minute you stop believing He's doing all things well, you just walked out of the secret place. When I was eight years of age, my mother contracted polio, and our life took a dramatic turn. My mom was the church pianist.

A conservatory trained. We had our own key to the door at the church. We were the first to come and the last to leave.

We lived at church, and I loved it. And if the church doors were open, we were there. And I don't care what it was, man, if there was any kind of a service, we were in, we just loved it.

Then one morning when I was eight, I can remember walking down into the kitchen, and my mom's standing at the stove. It's real early. And she looked at me and she said, Davey, run get your dad.

I think I'm really sick. And my mom walked out of the kitchen into the living room, just about as far as these men sitting right here, and sat down on the couch and never walked again. Polio spinal meningitis had come to our house.

I watched my mom begin to curl up and spasm. I watched her gasp as, I can't breathe, Davey. And her eyes just filled with blood that started to come out.

I watched her hands, those beautiful hands, that could play so masterfully. I watched them, they began to curl and shake and go into all kinds of contorted positions. We called for the ambulance, before they came.

But I remember when they walked in, my sister and I are standing there, and without saying a word, they said to my dad, Polio, and they walked over to my mom and punched a hole, a huge hole in her throat, so

she could even breathe. They turned to my dad and they said, we'll do everything we can, but we don't think she'll make it to the hospital. Wait a minute, dad, what are you doing now? My mom's one of your better servants.

All my dad's done has been faithful to you. I know people who never go to church, they don't have none of this. They took my mom, and I didn't realize when she went out the door, I wouldn't see her for two and a half years.

When you're eight, two and a half years is a long time. We lived for every phone call. We got quarantined, put a huge orange sign on our house, said, Polio, keep out.

They said, we've revived her a number of times, but the disease is ravishing her body. And I said, this isn't fair, dad. It's not right.

I don't know who this should happen to, but it shouldn't happen to my mom, I can tell you that. Finally they came back and they said, it's looking a little better, she's completely paralyzed from the neck down. But we got her in an iron lung and she's stabilized.

I didn't know what an iron lung was. And they said, but with all the trauma to her brain, she's gonna be severely damaged. And I'd lay in my bed at night and I'd say, God, you're not handling this right.

This isn't the way it should be. I didn't know what to think. For two years we lived for those phone calls.

And how's mom doing? Finally they said, you and your sister are gonna get to see your mother. Now we weren't gonna get to touch her or be by her, but we were gonna go up in a building and we were gonna look across a little courtyard and we were gonna bring her to a window in another building and there was a speaker there. And I don't sound like much.

But when you haven't seen your mom for two years, that's everything. So my sister and I were getting ready to go to that and my sister, bless her heart, she's a sister. How many of you have a sister? She was always the all-A student, Dr. Goetsch, and I was her brother.

And as we got ready to go to the hospital, she said to me the night before, she said, now whatever you do, keep your mouth shut. She said, you're always saying stupid stuff, David. And there's no telling what you'll say, so don't say something stupid.

I said, darn it, I just want to see her. That's all I want. I won't say nothing, I just want to see her.

The day came and then we went down there and went up to about like third, fourth floor and we're standing by a window and a nurse came up and she said, are you the Gibbs kids? And we said, yeah, yeah. They said, well, she's had a very bad night. She can't hardly breathe.

And she's fighting. But she wants to see you. So don't leave.

And we stood there for, I know, over an hour, maybe close to two. And I kept saying, Lord, you could at least let us see her. Would that be too much? Finally, they brought my mom.

And she was on this complicated bed with breathing help and her face was the other way and you could hear her in the speaker. She said, turn my head so I can see my kids. And when they turned her head, she went into spasm and terrible pain.

She's muffling all these screams. And I thought, God, you could have left her neck. You took her legs.

You took her hands. She can't hardly breathe. Would have been too much for you to leave her neck.

My sister reached over and squeezed my hand and she said, now, don't you say nothing. Finally, they turned and there's mom. If I lived to be 1,000, I won't forget the first words she said.

She looked at both of us and she said, Davey, don't you think that. How many of you know moms can read their kids' faces? And I did what every kid did. I said, don't think what, mom.

How many of you all ever did that one, right? It's called play the dumb card. Don't think what, mom. You know what she said? Son, this isn't what I ever planned, but he's doing all things well.

Don't you forget it. And I thought, mom, if it makes you feel better to say that, you say it, go ahead, but I don't think so. And boy, she said, Davey, I mean it.

He's doing all things well. Can I tell you why I believe I do today what I do? Because when life put a bear hug on my mom, she pulled us to the secret place. What does it take for you to get upset so that you question God about what's happening? What does it take to get you or me out of the secret place? Another six months, mom got to come home.

What a big day. And I can remember mom came home. They got her all strapped in a wheelchair.

We have all this power equipment to help her breathe. And my dad said, we haven't had family devotions now in a very long time. And he said, before we help mom get in bed, let's have devotions.

And my dad read some scripture, and then we'd go around it. When it came to my mom's turn, what she'd like to pray for, she said, I just want to thank the Lord for what he's doing. And she looked right at me, and she said, because he's doing all things well, you know.

Do you understand the Bible says that? And the devil's job is to squeeze that out of you so that you won't say that. Our pastor came to see us. And one of the things my mom had said in that first family devotions, I mean, here she is, she can't eat, can't feed herself, can't do anything.

And she said, I just want to thank the Lord. He's doing all things well. And she said, would you pray with me that God gives me something to do for him? And I'm like, number one, mom, we've been down that path.

And look at where we are. And number two, mom, what would you do? Our preacher came to see us. And it was not a good visit.

He came to see us, and he said, I just wanted to come pray with you, which was polite. And then he said, the church does not want you to come back. We're afraid of the polio.

And I thought, what are you talking about? And he said, we took a vote, you lost. And we don't want you to come back. And I got ticked off.

How many of y'all have ever gotten ticked off? And I sat there and I thought, you can keep your crummy church for all of you. I mean, I was getting upset, upset. And my mom said, well, I understand the fear.

And she said, that's okay. She said, we won't come back. But she said, Pastor, could you do me one favor and pray that God would give me something to do for him? What happened next was not a good moment.

That preacher looked at my mom and said, Miss Gibbs, you need to understand, God's through with you. When he said that, remember, I was already ticked off. I promise you, I was up out of my seat and halfway across the room with my fist balled up.

I was going to knock his teeth out. I was going to fix it where he'd brush his teeth out the back of his neck the rest of his life. Do you know what was going through me? You may be right, but you're not going to talk to my mom that way.

How dare you. My mom, mid-course, she said, Davey, you stop. Now, the preacher knew.

I was going, he's already flinching. He was. My mom said, you stop.

And I looked at her and she said, no, you honor me, you stop. You sit back down. So I walked over and sat back down.

I am just fuming. My mom turned to that preacher and she said, you're wrong. You know what she said next? She said, I'm extremely damaged goods.

But God loves to use extremely damaged goods. And she said, music was my life and it's gone. And she said, God just loves to use somebody.

And she said, you're wrong, pastor. You're just wrong. And he said, well, Miss Gibbs, I'll never forget, he said, would you make sure your boy stays here and I'll walk out alone? Because I was still sitting there with my fist clenched up and I was thinking I'll deck him on the way to the car.

Oh, was that mad. When he left, my mom said, Davey, you come here. Come up here close to my face.

She said, God's never through with anybody. She's the one who said, if you've got breath, you've got something to do for God. And she said, I don't know what it is.

I don't care what it is. I just want to do something for him. A new preacher came to town and he dropped by our house to see us.

When he came in, he said, I just want to tell you, he said, I'm called to the Lord to start a church here and he said, we're just getting going. He said, we don't have any people yet. But he said, I heard you've been through a lot and I just wanted to come pray with you.

He's very polite. And my mom said to him, well, our other church would rather we not come because of the polio and people are afraid of it. I liked what he said.

He said, I don't know anything about polio, but I know a little bit about God. And he said, why don't you just come sit on the front row with me? He said, there's nobody else there. It'll be fine.

And you know what? I thought I liked this man because he's nice to my mom. And my mom said, can I ask you to pray for one thing? She said, could you pray God and give me something to do for him? What happened next amazed me. He lays down on our living room floor.

He doesn't kneel. He lays down, face down. I'd never seen that.

And man, he starts praying. I thought the guy was having a seizure or something. You know what he starts praying? Lord, this lady loves you.

She's already testified. She believes you're doing all things well and she wants to do something for you. Now God, here's what I'm asking you.

Don't leave her wondering what it is. And God, make sure that we know and we'd like to know right away she's been through enough. And he's just praying away.

I thought, man, I don't know. That's a strange way to pray, but I think I'm liking this guy better and better. Midway through the prayer, he, like, mid-hiccup, stops.

And he says, well, sure. Why didn't I think of that? And he stands up. And you know what? It's like he's talking to somebody.

And I'm looking around like... He said, Miss Gibbs, this is so crazy. He said, now, we don't have any kids, so there's no kids in our Sunday school, but we have a Sunday school and how would you like to head that up? And I'm sitting there thinking, how do you have a Sunday school with no kids? And then the next thought hit me. My mom? Will you look? And he walked over and touched my mom and he said, Miss Gibbs, I mean it.

My mom said, I'd love to. And she said, now your Sunday school has two kids? And she said, I got a boy and a girl. And I thought, oh, wonderful.

I'm doomed to go to church with my sister the rest of my life. He said, well, he said, it's perfect. I remember my mom saying, all the adults just stare at me.

But the kids don't. Boy, he left. And my mom said, he sure does all things well, doesn't he? Boy, next Sunday, we're there.

My mom all strapped up, my sister and me. And every Sunday, if there was just two of us, it was like there were 2,000 kids there. And she poured her heart into it.

And pretty soon, people wanted to see this lady that talked to kids that's strapped in a wheelchair. And the Sunday school started to grow a little bit. And one day, my mom said, you know, we gotta do something to bring more kids.

And she said, I got an idea. She said, your grandfather, when he had all those trucks for the meat business, would clean them out every Saturday and would put canvas tops on them and he had wooden stairs they carried and he paid the drivers to go pick up kids and take them to Sunday school. And he would take about 400 kids to Sunday school in the trucks every Sunday.

They didn't call them bus kids, they called them truck kids. And every kid who came, he gave an orange to. Now she said, you can't do that with trucks anymore, but there's a big bus company uptown.

And she said, let's go up there and have them give us a bus so we can bring some kids to Sunday school. I said, Mom, I don't think they'd give them away. I don't think so.

And she said, do you not understand? Ask. Seek. And you shall receive.

And she said, I want you to take me. That's just by faith. The first key, the first key to being in the secret place is with a passion you believe he does all things well.

Here's the second key. Number one, he does all things well. Number two, he is in control.

He is in control. You remember Nebuchadnezzar, the book of Daniel? Man, your God rules in the affairs of men and none can stay his hand. What kind of God do you have? The Bible says the God we serve is in control.

Now we half pray like, well, God, why don't you see if you could take a shot at this. I don't know what you could do, but God says, don't you understand? I'm all powerful and I am in control. God tonight's not sitting in heaven wringing his hands saying, oh my goodness, what's going on down there? What am I going to do? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh and have them in derision.

Do you really believe he does all things well? And do you really believe he's in control? If you don't believe he's in control, how in the world do you have any faith? I kept saying to my mom, Mom, don't get too excited. I just don't think this is going to fly. And she'd say, Davey, the God we serve's in control.

And she said, I'd never get him to give me one. You sure wouldn't, but God could. I've been asking.

Oh boy, came the day where to go up to the bus company. I get my mom in the car. We're driven up there.

The bus company's huge. Buses are everywhere. We're having trouble parking.

And finally we find a spot right up against a building. Some windows there we park. And something happened that was horrible.

I went around to help get my mom. And if you've ever tried to help somebody that can't help you back, accidentally I dropped her. And she hit terrible.

And I fell down and she fell down. And when she hit the ground, she screamed. She couldn't muffle it.

I'd never drop her, never. And I'm crying, and she's crying, and her body's shaking. I said, Mom, come on.

If God was in this, I wouldn't have dropped you. I said, let's go home. Let's forget this.

Well, she's still shaking in my arms. She said, no, you just wait. She said, you can't move me right now.

I'll pass out. But she said, in a minute, you're gonna help me. And I don't want them to know I was crying.

I want you to dry my face up. And we're gonna go get our bus. Because he's in control.

Have your kids ever heard you talk, he's in control? I laid there hugging my mom, and I thought, I'm telling you, Dr. Getz, she believes this. We were on the ground 45 minutes. Boy, finally, I helped get her up and strapped in, and she said, no, I don't want them to know I was crying.

Davey, you fixed my face. Boy, I did. We went in, and nice young receptionist sitting there, a girl, and she said, can I help you folks? And my mom said, yeah, we've come so you can give us a bus.

And the girl looked a little puzzled, and she said, you mean you want to buy one? She said, no, we don't have money. We need you to give it to us so we can get kids to Sunday school. She was polite, and she

said, well, I'm just the receptionist, but let me get somebody down here who can help you.

And my mom said, that'd be good. So she calls and gets this guy. Turns out vice president of the whole thing, his name is Al.

And she said, this lady's down here, so you can give her a bus so she can get kids to Sunday school. And you can hear Al, he's kind of abrasive, direct. He said, tell the lady we don't do that, never have done it, we're not starting today.

And the girl said back, you come down and tell her she's in a wheelchair. So here comes Al. Real direct, real just, he says, look, no sense in you wasting my time.

I don't want to waste yours. We're not going to give you a bus. Now when you get money, you come back, we'll talk.

But no bus. And my mom said, well, appreciate you coming down, but she said, before I leave, could I ask you a question? And he said, yeah, sure, go ahead. She said, do you own the buses? And he said, what do you mean? My mom said, do you own the buses? And he said, well, no, the owner owns the buses.

I'm just the vice president here. And that little secretary, he don't own the buses. He likes to act like he owns the buses.

But he's not the president. He don't own the buses. She turned to my mom and she said, that was a really good question, lady.

My mom said, well, no wonder you can't give me a bus. They're not yours. I got to talk to the owner.

And he said, lady, the owner is not coming down here. That quick, that little girl dialed the owner. And here comes the owner.

The owner comes down, nice man. He says, lady, I understand you want me to give you a bus. And he said, I'm not going to do it.

But he said, I want to tell you why I came down. When you parked your car unbeknownst to you, you parked under my office window. And when that boy dropped you, I saw it.

And I watched you scream. He said, lady, I don't know what to do with you. He said, I've never seen anybody that a bus matters that much to.

And he said, there's something tearing me up inside. And that's why I'm here. My mom said, well, can I tell you one thing? He said, sure, go ahead.

She said, one day when you stand before God, he's going to be awfully upset with you if you don't give me a bus. The vice president smacked him. The little girl, she said, that's right.

That's in the Bible. That owner looked at my mom and he said, I got a question. If I give you a bus, who'd drive it? He said, you.

And my mom looked at him and she said, I never thought of that. She said, I need to give for you to give me a bus and a driver. That man looked at my mom and he said, lady, he said, something's just tearing me up.

Do you understand our God is in control? He said, here's the deal. I'm going to give you one bus, one driver, one Sunday. One and only one.

And I stood there and I thought, I don't believe this. She got a bus and a driver. My mom said, oh, thanks.

But she said, can I say one more thing? She said, there's two sides to town and I was too fearful to ask for two. I really need two buses and two drivers. That little girl, that's what she needs.

I'll never forget her. He said, all right, lady. And before he could say any more, the vice president said, what are you doing? And he turned to that and he said, now she's already pointed out to you, you don't know this.

And she said, it's obvious, nothing's stirring in you, but something's tearing me up. He said, lady, here's the deal. I'll give you two buses and two drivers for one Sunday.

But she said, you gotta promise me you're gonna be dead positive God knows about this. And my mom said, oh, I will, I will. We're on our way back home.

I said, mom, I don't believe this. You got two buses, I can't believe it. She said, I didn't do that.

She said, the God I serve did that. She said, I can't feed myself. But I got a God who does all things well.

And he is in control. He only gave us two buses and two drivers for one Sunday. Because the second Sunday he gave us three.

And within less than two years, he was giving us 35 buses and 35 drivers every Sunday. The Sunday school that had no kids in less than five years' time, never had less than 5,000 children in it. And it was all run by a lady.

And it was all run by a lady who couldn't do anything for herself. Who, in her own words, was extremely damaged goods. But she's right, God loves to use damaged goods.

She went to the city, did the same thing. She said, I want anybody on their way to Sunday school to be able to ride any city bus for free. And a man stood up and said, we've never done this before.

And she said, well, you should have. And then she looked at him and she said, and one day when you stand before God, you will wish you had. You know who stood up after my mom? The bus owner.

And he said, give her that and don't tell her what you'll have to give after that. Every Sunday, my mom would say, now you push me down by the buses. She'd say, those drivers are going to church and I'd push her wheelchair and everything.

She'd come up to him and she'd say, now put out your cigarette, you're going to church. And they'd say, no ma'am, we're not going. And she'd say, yes you are, now you follow me.

And like little ducks, they'd follow her in. When it was all done, that bus owner wrote my mom a letter and he said, miss Gibbs, because you cared about a bus and believed God was in control. He said, my whole family's saved.

Every driver in my company is saved. And we went through an economic downturn. They all volunteered to drive Sundays for free.

And then he said, I don't know how you got me to paint those buses the church colors, but we even did that. I said, mom, look at this. She said, I didn't do it.

I didn't do it. But she said, if I serve a God who does all things well, and he is in control. It's called the secret place.

Number one, he does all things well. Number two, he's all powerful and he's in control. Number three, you gotta praise him.

You gotta praise him. My sisters in my bedroom was upstairs and my parents' bedroom was downstairs. And as my mom's legs atrophied and all her internal organs were taking such a beating, she would go through unbelievable pain.

And I'd sit at the top of the stairs because at night when she was in so much pain, she'd pray. Have your kids ever heard you call out their names in the middle of the night? I heard my mom call my name a thousand times. She'd say, God, be with me.

And I'd be like, what? She'd spasm. And she'd say, God, give me breath. And then she'd say, I wanna praise you.

Thank you. Wanna know how good a Christian you are? What does it take to squelch the praise? What does it take? I was invited to a wonderful all-black church, a large church, a great church. And when I got there, I came in on Sunday morning, sat down over here, and I'm looking around, and this just never happened to me before.

It dawned on me I was the only person not of color in that church. The people were gracious, kind. They couldn't have been better.

But I'd just never been the only person not of color. And I'm sitting there, and a lady comes in, and I'm on the front pew over here, and about that far away, she sits down from me. And she says, hello.

And I said, hello. And I said, how are you? And she said, fine, how are you? I said, great. And I'm watching her put her stuff away.

Finally, she sits down, gets her coat off and everything, and she turns to me. And I didn't understand, this lady's gonna change my life forever. I will never, ever be the same.

I will leave that service wanting to be like her. We're sitting there just looking at each other, and finally she turned to me, and she said, what are you doing here, white boy? Now, in my whole life, my mother called me white boy. And it startled me.

She said it polite, but white boy. I said, well, and I started calling myself white boy. She said, what are you doing here, white boy? I said, well, white boy's gonna preach this morning.

She said, you're gonna preach? I said, yeah. She said, isn't that a hoot? I said, that is a hoot, you're right. You're right.

You know what I mean? She said, you got the stuff, white boy? I said, I beg your pardon? She said, don't play stupid, white boy. She said, if the preacher ain't got the stuff, we don't have church. And she says, you got the stuff or you don't got the stuff, and if you don't got it, you sit right down here and let somebody

stand up there that's got the stuff.

She said, now, you got it or not? I said, white boy's got the stuff. I didn't know what to say. I'm telling you, I was... Wow.

She said, they tell you how we do stuff here? I said, no. Oh, she said, well, let me tell you. She said, service gonna start right on time, eight minutes from now? I said, yeah.

She said, and we're gonna sing for at least an hour. I said, an hour? Oh, she said, yeah. She said, if you love God, she said, you know, man, you don't love God, good chance you're not even saved because you don't like to sing.

And she said, man, singing drives the world out, it gets the devil mad, it brings God in, we get to praise him. She said, sometimes we sing more than an hour. She said, you love to sing, white boy? I said, oh, yeah, I never get enough of it right.

I mean, I'm telling you right now, boy. I'm like, wow. She says, after we're done singing, we have testimonies.

She said, oh, they're wonderful. She said, people talk about stuff they've been delivered from and what God's doing and what they're, and she said, man, sometimes they stand up and, man, they confess crimes they've done, and when they confess a crime, we take them right down to the jail and turn them in. I said, now, you all what now? Oh, she said, man, just a couple weeks ago, a guy come forward and he got saved and he said, I want to testify, I need to confess.

He said, I tried to blow the chief of police's car up with his family in it. He said, the bomb went off too early, I blew his car, and I'm the one that did it. She said, man, we all took him down to the chief of police.

He got on his knees and confessed. Oh, she said, testimonies are good. She said, you've not done any crimes, have you, white boy? And I thought, none that I'm talking about this morning.

No, no, no, no, no. Good night. She said, after that, we take the offering.

And she said, that normally takes 45 minutes or more. I said, 45? She said, oh, yeah. She said, you know how it is, there's people there that God puts something in their pocket, God wants them to give and they don't want to let go.

And if they leave with that they're kicked off. So the preacher's got to help them get right. She said, you love to give, don't you? And I'm thinking, I don't know what's in my pocket, but it's all going in this morning, man, good night.

She said, in comes the preacher. Now, she said, you hear me, white boy, we didn't come to get out. We'd come to go to church.

She said, if you come to get out, just best you not come. What an insult to God. She said, whatever stuff you got, make sure we get it.

And don't cut it short. I said, wow. She said, now, could you do me a favor, white boy? I said, sure.

She said, could you move over? Now, there's that much room between us. I said, okay, somebody else coming? She said, no. I said, well, why do you need me to move over? She said, because when I get singing, I need my room.

She said, you see, I'm addicted to praising him. She said, I don't like it. I don't love it.

I adore it. She said, it's the passion of my life, praising him. Would anybody accuse you of being addicted to him by how you sing? And do you adore praising him? Adore? I moved over.

Good thing I did. That dear sister, man, she got singing. And you know what? She's singing and crying, and pretty soon I'm crying.

And I don't know why we're crying. I want you to hear me. Her passion pulled me in.

Has your passion ever affected anybody, let alone pulled them in? Man, we're singing, and I'm like, boy, I want to praise the Lord like she does. Hour and 50, it went by like that. Finally, the preacher said, come on up here, David.

I remember when I walked away, she said, give it all, white boy, give it all. She didn't say that unkind. You got to understand.

I'm up by the preacher, and I said, you know that lady down there? He said, yeah, you're sitting down there by Abby, Sister Abby. I said, preacher, she's amazing. I'm telling you, she has a passion for praising Jesus Christ, a passion.

And I said, I'm telling you, she's affected. He said, well, did she share her testimony with you? I said, no. He said, well, David, let me tell you.

He said, just a couple years ago, her husband and two junior high boys walked down to the bus stop. They're going to catch the bus to school, her husband, the bus to work. They don't know why.

They think it was just a gang thing. Early in the morning, some shotguns came out and killed her two boys and her husband. He said, then, David, unthinkable, they got out of the car and blew the heads off her two sons and took them.

I met her at the hospital, and I said, Abby, what do you want to do? She said, let's have church. I need to get back to my passion. He does all things well.

He's in control. I said, wow. He said, did she tell you she has stage four cancer and no money for medicine? I said, no, she didn't tell me that.

All she did was tell me about her, Jesus. And all I know is I want to be like her. Would anybody want to be like you? Would anybody want to be like me? Would we be able to take a young woman to church or a young boy and say, you have the passion of that man, you'll be fine.

And do you have a passion to praise? My mom's health was deteriorating terrible. We're in church, and our preacher said, I want us to praise the Lord for a minute, and he said, we don't do this often, but I want you to hold your arm up and praise the Lord. I'm sitting by my mom, and she said, Davey, hold my arm up.

I said, Mom, God understands. She said, I don't want to understand. I said, Mom, that hurts you terribly.

She said, not nearly as bad as not praising up. And I held her arm up and with tears, she said, I praise you, I praise you, I praise you. Where do you want to live? It's called the secret place of the most high.

And God says, it's your choice. I do all things well. And I am all powerful and in control.

And I want you in everything to give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Do you have the passion to praise? I'd give anything if I could just sit at the top of those stairs one more time and hear my mom praise the Lord. I'd give anything if I could sit next to Sister Abby one more time and just hear that passion.

But now it's my turn. Now it's your turn. It's called the secret place.

God's inviting. Will you go? Father, thank you. Your words, so powerful, so convicting, so clear.

Why would we want to dwell any place else? Your ways are perfect. You do all things well.

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